

# **PATH FINDERS**

## **Lesson 17**

**Brief Introduction to Syro Malabar History - Level 3**

## Historical Origin and Development of Syro Malabar Christianity



### The Origin of St. Thomas Christians and Their Denominations

#### St. Thomas the Apostle and his missionary journeys

St. Thomas the Apostle also called Didymus was one of the Twelve Apostles of Jesus according to the New Testament. Traditionally, St. Thomas is believed to have travelled outside the Roman Empire to preach the Gospel, reached Muziris, (modern day North Paravur and Kodungalloor in the state of Kerala, India) in AD 52 and converted several people, founding what today are known as Saint Thomas Christians or Mar Thoma Nazranis.



After his martyrdom at Mylapore in AD 72 the reputed relics of Saint Thomas the Apostle were enshrined as far as Mesopotamia,

and later moved to various places. In 1258, some of the relics were brought to Ortona, in Abruzzo, Italy, where they have been held in the Church of Saint Thomas the Apostle.

The mission of St. Thomas in India is considered as an accepted fact. An ocean of literature is already written about the Indian mission of Thomas and there is no dearth of writers and scholars who are experts on the subject.

#### Initial Ministry of St. Thomas the Apostle

After the Pentecost the Apostles began their missionary expedition and traditionally it is believed that St. Thomas preached his Christ Experience to the Persians and made many followers for Jesus. Historically speaking early Christian in India had close identity with Christians in Syria and Persia. There is tradition that believes that St. Thomas and St. Bartholomew came to India from the region of Persia.

The Liturgy of Mar Addai and Mar Mari has its faith origin from St. Thomas. Mar Addai was the disciple of St. Thomas the Apostle and Mar Mari was the disciple of Mar Addai. The Liturgy of Addai and Mari (or the Holy Qurbana of Mar Addai and Mar Mari) is the Divine Qurbana.

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### Subsequent Sub-divisions

#### The Koonan Cross Oath and the Subsequent Divisions

The oppressive rule of the Portuguese provoked a reaction on the part of the St. Thomas Christians. The first protest took place in 1653, known as the Koonan Kurishu Satyam (Koonan Cross Oath). Under the leadership of Archdeacon Thomas, a part of the Thomas Christians publicly took an oath at Matancherry, Cochin,



that they would not obey the Portuguese bishops and the Jesuit missionaries. In the same year, in Alangad, Archdeacon Thomas was ordained, by the laying on of hands of twelve priests, as the first known indigenous Metropolitan of Kerala, under the name Mar Thoma I.

#### Syrian Orthodox Church (Jacobites Church)

After the Coonan Cross Oath, between 1661 and 1662, out of the 116 churches, the Catholics claimed seventy-two churches, leaving Archdeacon Mar Thoma I thirty-two churches and twelve churches being shared. The seventy-two churches and their congregations were the body from which the Syro Malabar Catholic Church have descended.

The other thirty-two churches and their congregations were the body from which the Syriac Orthodox (Jacobites & Orthodox), Malabar Independent Syrian Church (Thozhiyur Sabha) in 1772, Mar Thoma Syrian (Reformed Syrians) (1874), Syro Malankra Catholic Church (1930) have originated.

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In 1665, Mar Gregorios by the Syriac Orthodox in India and the group Archdeacon Thomas resulted in the Mar spiritual authority of the gradually introduced customs and script to



Abdul Jaleel, a Bishop sent Patriarch of Antioch arrived under the leadership of the welcomed him. This visit Thoma party claiming Antiochean Patriarchate and the West Syriac liturgy, the Malabar Coast.

The arrival of Mar Gregorios in 1665 marked the beginning of a formal association of

Mar Gregorios Abdul Jaleel, a Bishop sent by the Syriac Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch

Christians with the Syriac Orthodox Church of Antioch. Those who accepted the West Syriac theological and liturgical tradition of Mar Gregorios became known as Jacobites (Puthenkoottukar). Those who continued with East Syriac theological and liturgical tradition and stayed faithful to the Synod of Diamper are known as the Syro-Malabar Catholic Church (Pazhayakoottukar) in communion with the Catholic Church.

the Thomas

They got their own Syro-Malabar Hierarchy on 21 December 1923 with the

Metropolitan Mar Augustine Kandathil as the head of their Christians by this process got West Syriac branches.

Metropolitan Mar Augustine Kandathil as the head of Syro-Malabar Hierarchy in 1923



Church. St. Thomas divided into East Syriac and

### Syro Malankara Catholic Church

In 1930 a section of the Malankara Orthodox Church under the leadership of Mar Ivanios and Mar Theophilus came into communion with the Catholic Church, retaining all of the Church's rites, Liturgy, and autonomy is known as Syro Malankara Catholic Church. In 1932, the Syro-Malankara church was officially established by Pope Pius XI, under the leadership of Mar Ivanios. The Syro-Malankara Catholic Church also known as the Malankara Syrian Catholic Church is an Eastern Catholic sui iuris particular church in full communion with the Pope with self governance under the Code of

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Canons of the Eastern Churches. Saint Thomas Christian denominations are traditional Christian denominations

### Latin Roman Catholic Church in India

The presence of the Latin Church in India, particularly on the coast of Kerala has protracted over eleven centuries or more. However, the work of evangelization was enthusiastically revived by the western missionaries in the 13th century. The arrival of the Portuguese missionaries came at the time of the exploration of the Malabar Coast by Portuguese traders in the 16th century, opening a new jurisdiction of the Portuguese Padroado in the field of Mission.

Cochin and Goa became two main settlements of Portuguese in the 16th century. As a result, the City of Goa was erected as suffragan to Lisbon. By 1557 Goa became an Archdiocese with Cochin and Malaca as suffragans. Aside from communities of Christians in Goa, Cochin, Mylapore, Travancore, Madurai, Vasai and Mumbai, missionaries made their way into the interior as far as Bengal, Agra, Delhi, Lahore and to Tibet.

The first of these missionaries were Franciscans, followed by Jesuits. The present faithful of the Latin Church in India is the result of the evangelization of the European missionaries during the period of imperial colonialism.

### Syro Malabar Catholic Church

The Syro-Malabar Church descends from the part of the community known as Pazhayakuttukar, or "Old Party", that after the Coonan Cross Oath in 1653, reentered in formal communion with the Holy See of Rome.

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In 1887, the Pope established two Apostolic Vicariates, Thrissur and Kottayam under the guidance of indigenous Syro-Malabar bishops and named the Church as "The Syro-Malabar Church" to distinguish them from the Latins.

The Holy See re-organized the Apostolic Vicariates again in 1896, into three Apostolic Vicariates (Thrissur, Ernakulam, and Changanassery).

In 1923, Pope Pius XI set up a full-fledged Syro-Malabar hierarchy with Ernakulam Angamaly as the Metropolitan See and Mar Augustine Kandathil as the first Head and Archbishop of the Church.

In 1992, Pope John Paul II raised the Syro-Malabar Church to Major Archi episcopal rank and appointed Cardinal Antony Padiyara of Ernakulam as the first Major Archbishop.

The Syro-Malabar Church is the third largest Particular Church (*sui iuris*) in the Catholic Church (after the Latin and the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church).



Metropolitan Mar Augustine Kandathil as the head of Syro-Malabar Hierarchy in 1923

Cardinal Antony Padiyara of Ernakulam the first Major Archbishop of Syro Malabar Church, 1992

## The Dark Era of Invasions<sup>[edit]</sup>

- December 1790 - Invasion of Mysore ruler Tipu Sultan on Kingdom of Cochin. Ancient Syrian churches at Palayur, Arthat, Ollur, Parappukkara, Velayanad (Mukundapuram), Ambazhakad, Thazhekad, Angamaly, Akaparamb etc. were destroyed by the Mysore army. The Syrian seminari and nasrani church headquarters at Angamaly were devastated.
- The headquarters of the church moved first to Alengad and then to Vadayar in Travancore.
- Many priests and laymen were martyred for faith and hundreds of Nasranis migrated to Travancore to protect their faith.
- 20 March 1799 – Death of [Paremmakkal Thoma Kathanar](#)
- 10 February 1805 – Birth of [Kuriakose Elias Chavara](#) at Kainakary, Alappuzha
- 1818 – Arrival of the CMS<sup>[who?]</sup> missionaries
- 11 May 1831 – Foundation of the first indigenous religious congregation (CMI) at [Mannanam](#) by Frs. Thomas Palackal, Thomas Porookara and [Kuriakose Elias Chavara](#)

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- 1833 – Establishment of the Seminary at Mannanam
- 24 April 1838 – The final Latin invasion on the Indian Syrian church - the Metropolitan See of Kodungallur (Angamaly for Syrians) and the See of Cochin were suppressed and territory was added to Vicariate Apostolic of Verapoly by the Brief "Multa Praeclara" of Pope Gregory XVI
- 1861- The arrival of chaldean bishop Thomas mar Rocos
- 8 June 1861 – [Fr. Kuriakos Elias Chavara](#) appointed Vicar General for Syrians
- 13 February 1866 – Foundation of the first indigenous religious congregation for women (CMC) at Koonammavu
- 13 August 1866 – Establishment of Seminary at Puthenpally
- 1866 – Purchase of land in the name of Parayil Varky Tharakan at Mangalappuzha near Aluva
- 3 January 1871 – Death of [Kuriakose Elias Chavara](#)
- 1 August 1874 – Chaldean bishop Mar Elia Melus arrived in Kerala
- 25 October 1874 – Mar Melus excommunicated by Rome. Origin of Suryis of Thrisur (Assyrian Church of the East)
- 26 April 1876 – Birth of Sr. Mariam Thressia at Puthenchira, Thrisur
- 12 October 1877 – Episcopal ordination of Bishop Marcellinus OCD
- 17 October 1877 – Birth of Sr. Euphrasia (Rose) at Kattur, in the parish Edathuruthy, Thrisur
- 15 November 1877 – Bishop Marcellinus OCD made ruler of the Syrians
- 19 March 1878 – Bishop Marcellinus OCD commenced his reign
- 23 June 1886 – See of Cochin (for Latin Catholics) restored by Pope Leo XIII
- 1 September 1886 – Establishment of the Latin Hierarchy in India by Pope Leo XIII by the decree *Humanae Salutis Auctor*; Vicariate Apostolic of Verapoly elevated to Archdiocese of Verapoly

## Era of self-governance<sup>[edit]</sup>

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- 20 May 1887 – two independent Vicariates of Kottayam (present *Changanaseri*<sup>1</sup>) and *Thrisur*<sup>2</sup> for Syrians; [Charles Lavigne](#) and [Adolf Medlycott](#) were made Vicar Apostolic respectively (*Quod Jampridem*, Pope Leo XIII)
- 14 December 1888 – foundation of Franciscan Clarist Congregation (FCC) at Changanaseri
- 16 September 1890 – seat of Kottayam Vicariate moved to Changanaseri
- 1 April 1891 – birth of Augustine Thevarparampil (Kunjachan) at Ramapuram, Kottayam
- 24 June 1892 – foundation of Sisters of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary (SVM) at Kaipuzha, Kottayam
- 28 July 1896 – Vicariate of *Ernakulam*<sup>3</sup> created, with territories from both Vicariates of Changanaseri and Thrissur and [Mar Aloysius Pazheparambil](#), Mar Mathew Makkil, and Mar John Menachery were made the bishops respectively (*Quae Rei Sacrae*, Pope Leo XIII).
- 8 December 1908 – foundation of Sisters of Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament (SABS) at Champakulam, Changanaseri
- 1 January 1911 – foundation of Sacred Heart Congregation for Women (Kerala) (SH) at Palai
- 29 August 1911 – establishment of *Kottayam*<sup>4</sup> Vicariate for the Knanaya (Suddists) Community of the Syrians

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- 14 May 1914 – foundation of the Congregation of Holy Family (CHF) at Puthenchira, Thirsur by Mariam Thressia
- 29 January 1921 – foundation of Eparchial Society of the Oblates of the Sacred Heart (OSH)

## Metropolitan Archbishop, Title restoration [\[edit\]](#)

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- 21 December 1923 – establishment of the Syro-Malabar Hierarchy with [Ernakulam](#) as the Metropolitan See and [Mar Augustine Kandathil](#) as the first Head and Archbishop of the Church (*Romani Pontifices*, Pope Pius XI)
- 16 November 1924 – [Mar Augustine Kandathil](#) installed as Archbishop
- 19 March 1927 – foundation of the [Sisters of the Destitute](#) (SD) at Chunungumvely, Ernakulam by [Varghese Payyappilly Palakkappilly](#)
- 19 July 1927 – foundation of the Vincentian Congregation (VC)
- 3 July 1928 – foundation of Sisters of St Joseph Congregation (SJC) at Kottayam
- 5 October 1929 – death of Mar Varghese Payyappilly Palakkappilly
- 19 March 1931 – foundation of the [Congregation of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux](#) (CST) by [Mar Augustine Kandathil](#) as a religious brothers congregation, the first such in India
- 1 June 1932 – establishment of Mangalapuzha Seminary
- 7 May 1933 – foundation of the Missionary Congregation for the Blessed Sacrament (MCBS)
- 1 January 1944 – foundation of Congregation of Sisters of Charity (CSC) at Chollannoor, Thirsur
- 31 October 1944 – foundation of Medical Sisters of St Joseph (MSJ) at Kothamangalam
- 27 December 1945 – [Fr. Thomas Panatt \(Fr. Basilius CST\)](#) founds the priestly wing of the [Congregation of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux](#) (CST) to better realise its aims
- 19 March 1948 – foundation of Congregation of the Sisters of Nazareth (CSN) at Edakkunnu, Ernakulam



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- 20 April 1948 – foundation of Congregation of the Sisters of St. Martha (CSM) at Ponnookara, Thrisur
- 2 April 1949 – foundation of Assisi Sisters of Mary Immaculate (ASMI) at Cherthala, Alappuzha by [Mgr. Joseph K. W. Thomas](#)
- 25 July 1950 – eparchy of *Pala*<sup>6</sup>
- 29 August 1952 – death of Sr. Euphrasia CMC
- 1 December 1953 – official visitation of Cardinal Tisserant of the Oriental Churches in India
- 31 December 1953 – Eparchy of *Thalaser*<sup>6</sup>
- 10 January 1956 – death of Archbishop [Mar Augustine Kandathil](#)
- 26 July 1956 – Changanaseri made Archiparchy
  
- 10 January 1957 – [Eparchy of Kothamangalam](#)<sup>7</sup>
- 1 June 1957 – establishment of [Dharmaram College](#), a major seminary by the CMI in Bangalore
- 1 January 1958 – Fr. Placid Podipara made Rector of Malabar College in Rome
- 25 January 1961 – foundation of Congregation of Samaritan Sisters (CSS) at Thrisur
- 19 December 1961 – The Portuguese surrendered to Indian army. Portuguese colonies including Goa were liberated and annexed to Indian Union.
- 31 March 1962 – eparchy of *Chanda*,<sup>8</sup> Maharashtra (CMI)
- 3 July 1962 – establishment of St. Thomas Apostolic Seminary, Vadavathoor, Kottayam
- 16 May 1968 – foundation of Malabar Missionary Brothers (MMB)
- 16 July 1968 – foundation of the [Missionary Society of St Thomas the Apostle](#) (MST)
- 29 July 1968 – eparchy of *Sagar*,<sup>9</sup> Madhya Pradesh (CMI)
- 29 July 1968 – eparchy of *Satna*,<sup>10</sup> Madhya Pradesh (VC)
- 29 July 1968 – eparchy of *Ujjain*,<sup>11</sup> Madhya Pradesh (MST)
- 3 July 1969 – foundation of Missionary Congregation of the Daughters of St. Thomas (DST) at Aruvithura, Kottayam
- 23 March 1972 – eparchy of *Bijnor*,<sup>12</sup> Uttarakhand (CMI)
- 23 March 1972 – eparchy of *Jagdapur*,<sup>13</sup> Chattisgarh (CMI)
- 1 March 1973 – eparchy of *Mananthavady*<sup>14</sup>
- 16 October 1973 – death of Fr. Augustine Thevarparampil (Kunjachan)
- 20 March 1974 – St Marys Basilica, Ernakulam- first basilica in Syro Malabar church was designated.
- 20 June 1974 – eparchy of *Palakkad*<sup>15</sup>
- 25 February 1977 – eparchy of *Rajkot*<sup>16</sup> (CMI)
- 26 February 1977 – eparchy of *Kanjirappally*<sup>17</sup>
- 19 May 1977 – foundation of Society of Kristu Dasis (SKD) at Mananthavady by Bishop Jacob Thoomkuzhy
- 22 June 1978 – eparchy of *Irinjalakkuda*<sup>18</sup>
- 26 August 1978 – Cardinal [Joseph Parekkattil](#) attended Conclave – first of its kind from SyroMalabar Rite
- 8 September 1978 – Mar Antony Padiyara appointed Apostolic Visitor of Non-resident Keralite Syro-Malabarians by Pope John Paul I
- 19 June 1984 – eparchy of *Gorakhpur*,<sup>19</sup> Uttar Pradesh (CST)
- 27 April 1985 – death of [Father Placid J Podipara](#)

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- 19 December 1985 – approval of the Text of the Order of Syro-Malabar Qurbana by the Sacred Congregation for Oriental Churches
- 8 February 1986 – inauguration of the Order of Syro-Malabar Qurbana by Pope John Paul II at Kottayam
- 8 February 1986 – Beatification of Fr. Kuriakose Elias Chavara CMI and Sr. Alphonsa Muttathupadathu FCC at Kottayam by Pope John Paul II – first man and woman from India to the Altar
- 28 April 1986 – eparchy of *Thamaraseri*<sup>20</sup>
- 30 April 1988 – eparchy of *Kalyan*,<sup>21</sup> Maharashtra
- 3 July 1989 – establishment of the Renovated Syro-Malabar Qurbana by the Sacred Congregation for Oriental Churches
- 3 July 1989 – foundation of Sisters of St. Thomas (SST) at Managanam, Kottayam
- 25 April 1992 – Our Lady of Dolours Basilica, Thrissur designated.

## A Major-Archiepiscopal church [\[edit\]](#)

- 16 December 1992 – establishment of [Major Archiepiscopal](#) see of Ernakulam-Angamaly
- 29 January 1993 – Cardinal [Antony Padiyara](#), the first Major Archbishop (*Quae Majori Christifidelium*, [Pope John Paul II](#)), and Mar [Abraham Kattumana](#), made [Pontifical Delegate](#)
- 20 May 1993 – Cardinal Padiyara takes charge. First Synod of the Church
- 18 May 1995 – eparchies of Thrissur and Thalasseri made Archeparchies
- 18 December 1996 – Cardinal Padiyara's resignation accepted. Archbishop [Mar Varkey Vithayathil](#) CSSR, Apostolic Administrator of Ernakulam–Angamaly
- 11 November 1996 – Eparchy of *Thuckalay*,<sup>22</sup> (Kanyakumari) Tamil Nadu
- 28 October 1997 – foundation of Mar Thoma Sleeha Monastery (MTSM) at Nallathanni, Kottayam
- 3 February 1998 – Major Archiepiscopal Headquarters at Mount St. Thomas, [Kakkanad](#)
- 9 November 1998 – First Major Archiepiscopal Assembly
- 24 April 1999 – Eparchy of *Belthangady*,<sup>23</sup> (Mangaluru), Karnataka
- 23 July 1999 – Eparchy of *Adilabad*,<sup>24</sup> Telangana(CMI)
- 9 April 2000 – Beatification of [Sr. Mariam Thressia](#) CHF in Vatican by [Pope John Paul II](#)
- 6 July 2001 – Eparchy of [St. Thomas of Chicago](#),<sup>25</sup> United States
- 19 December 2002 – Eparchy of *Idukki*<sup>26</sup>
- 9 May 2005 – Eparchy of [Kottayam](#) made Archieparchy
- 30 April 2006 – Beatification of [Fr. Augustine Theavarparampil](#) (Kunjachan) at Ramapuram, Palai by Major Archbishop Varkey Vithayathil
- 3 December 2006 – Beatification of [Sr. Euphrasia](#) CMC at Ollur, Thrissur by Major Archbishop Cardinal Varkey Vithayathil
- 21 August 2007 – Eparchy of *Bhadravathi*,<sup>27</sup> Karnataka (MCBS)
- 22 July 2008 – [Christ University](#) – the first University by the Catholic Church in India, established by the [CMIs](#) in Bangalore
- 12 October 2008 – Canonization of [Sr. Alphonsa \(Anna\) Muttathupadath FCC](#) in Vatican by [Pope Benedict XVI](#) – the first woman Saint from India

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- 6 November 2008 – visit of Cardinal [Leonardo Sandri](#), [Prefect of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches](#); he visited many eparchies in Kerala and paid respects to [St. Alphonsa](#) at her tomb at Bharananganam
- 24 June 2009 – Pope Benedict XVI declares the [St. George Church](#) at [Angamaly](#) a minor Basilica
- 6 August 2009 – Major Archbishop promulgates the Order of Celebrations on Nativity of Our Lord, Ash Day, Osana Sunday, Thursday of Peshha, Friday of Passion, Great Saturday and Great Sunday of Resurrection
- 14 August 2009 – Fr. John Vadakkal CMI, appointed bishop of the Eparchy of [Bijoor](#)
- 23 August 2009 – Union Government of India issued coins in honour of [St. Alphonsa](#)
- 6 September 2009 – Mar Varghese Payyappilly Palakkappilly declared [Servant of God](#)
- 18 January 2010 – Eparchies of *Mandya*,<sup>28</sup> (Mysuru), Karnataka and *Ramanathapuram*,<sup>29</sup> (Coimbatore), Tamil Nadu
- 24 May 2011 – [Mar George Alencherry](#) elected as the third Major Archbishop
- 6 March 2012 – Eparchy of Faridabad (Delhi) erected for Indian states of Haryana, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, parts of Uttar Pradesh and national capital territory of Delhi.
- 11 January 2014 – Eparchy at Melbourne, Australia erected.
- 23 November 2014 – Canonisation of Blessed Chavara and Blessed Euphrasia
- 6 August 2015 – Apostolic exarchate at Mississauga, Canada.
- 26 August 2015 – Extension of the territory of eparchy of Mandya to Bangalore and certain other parts of Karnataka.
- 28 July 2016 – Erection of eparchy of Great Britain for England, Scotland and Wales.
- 27 November 2016 – Kallorkad St Marys church, Champakulam was designated as basilica.
- 10 October 2017 – 2 New eparchies were erected.
  - Eparchy of Hosur (Mylapore) erected for parts of Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry.
  - Eparchy of Shamshabad (Hyderabad) erected for Indian states of Goa, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Jharkhand, Bihar, West Bengal, Rajasthan, North Eastern states, parts of 8 other states and 4 union territories of India (including 2 island groups).
- – Extension of the territories of two eparchies: Ramanathapuram (Coimbatore) and Thuckalay (Kanyakumari).
- 4 November 2017 – Beatification of first woman martyr of Syro Malabar church, Sr. Rani Maria in Indore (Madhya Pradesh)
- Eparchy of Mississauga, Canada
- Canonization of Saint [Mariam Theresia](#)

**Conclusion :** This historical knowledge is an invitation to understand and respect the other Christian denominations who are also having a common origin and destiny.

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### Ezharappallikal Or Eight Churches Built By St Thomas In Kerala

Ezharappallikal or Eight Churches are found across the west coast of India which were established by the St Thomas the Apostle in the first century. As per records and Indian Christian traditions, St Thomas marked his arrival at Cranganore Port in 52 AD (the present day Kodungallur) and established a bunch of churches in the present-day Kerala and borders of Tamil Nadu. The churches came to be built close to the Jewish settlements which were already existent in the state of Kerala. The churches were built at Maliankara in Kodungallur, Kollam, Niranam, Nilackal, Kokkamangalam, Kottakavu, Palayoor and Thiruvithamkode which are located in the present-day Kanyakumari. An Interesting factor is that all the churches in this group belong to the different congregations of Christianity.

#### 1. The Marthoma Pontifical Shrine – Kodungallur

The Church is considered to be the first one to be built by St Thomas after his arrival to Kodungallur in 52 AD. The church is a major pilgrimage centre which is located on the banks of the Periyar river. The church houses the right arm bone of St Thomas which was brought from Ortona in Italy. The church is built in fusion of IndoPersian styles of architecture.



#### 2. St Thomas Syro – Malabar Catholic Church – Palayoor

The church here was built in the year 52 AD, by Thomas the Apostle when he came to visit the Jewish merchants at Palayoor which was a stronghold of Brahmins and Jews. The Apostle came to visit the merchants at Judankunnu (hill of Jews) to spread the message of the



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Gospel. As per historical evidences found here, an abandoned Hindu temple was converted into the present church and so are the ruins of Synagogue.

### 3. Kottakkavu Church - North

**Paravur** The Kottakkavu Church was established by St Thomas in North Paravur in the Ernakulam district. The Persian Cross which was preserved in the chapel is believed to have been engraved on a rock in the year 880 AD. A wooden cross, installed in the church by St Thomas, was seen until the 18th century but fell victim to the siege of Tipu Sultan.



### 4. St Thomas Church - Kokkamangalam

The church is located near Cherthala in the Alappuzha district. It is said that St Thomas, sailed to Kokkamangalam and converted 1600 people into Christians and installed a cross for the faithful. The cross was cut off by saboteurs and thrown into the Vembanad lake, through which it floated until coming to a stop at a place called Pallipuram where it is currently worshiped.



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### 5. St Thomas Church – Nilakkal

Nilakkal is a forest area located at a very close proximity to renowned Hindu pilgrimage site of Sabarimala. The church is said to be established in 54 AD in the forest trade route between Kerala and Tamil Nadu. St Thomas conducted baptism for 1100 people here. The church was hidden amidst the thick forests of the Western Ghats until it was discovered for the first time in the year 1902 until which it laid neglected for many years. The present structure was discovered in the year 1957 and since then has been well preserved.



### 6. St. Mary's Orthodox Syrian Church – Niranam

Popularly known as the Niranam Valiya Pally, the church was established in the year 54 AD. The church was reconstructed quite a number of times since its inception. One of the reconstructions is said to have taken place in the year 1259 as per the stones found here. The present structure was reconstructed in the year 1912 which is said to be the fourth reconstruction and was renovated in the year 2000.



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### 7. Port Church or Our Lady of Purification

**Church - Kollam** In ancient times, Kollam was a major harbor and trade centre, due to which St Thomas established a church near the port. The church was destroyed during the temporary transgression of the Arabian Sea; however, in the year 1986 Pope John Paul II laid the foundation stone for a church to be constructed at the spot which is the present Port Church or Our Lady of Purification Church.



### 8. St Mary's Church -

**Thiruvithamcode** The church is also as known as Arapally which was constructed in the year 63 AD. The church was named as Amalagiri by the Chera King Uthiyan Cheralathan. It is believed to be one of the world's oldest church which still offers prayers and has not been reconstructed even once till date.

